



and are able to live on their own in about three months.

Habitats

wet prairies and fens

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.

badger

Taxidea taxus

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Chordata - vertebrates
Class: Mammalia
Order: Carnivora
Family: Mustelidae

Features

The badger is 26 to 35 inches long, including a four- to six-inch long tail. It has a wide body and short legs. The body hairs have a yellowish cast at the base, are black in the middle, and are white at the tips giving the animal a gray appearance. Its short tail is the same color as its back. There are white markings on its face from the eyes to the ears. A white stripe can be seen from its nose to the middle of its back. The belly is white or tan. Long claws are present on the front feet.

Natural History

The badger lives in open areas like grasslands, hay meadows, road and drainage ditches, and terraces. It eats cottontails, ground squirrels, mice, plains pocket gophers, and voles. It is usually a nocturnal animal. The badger can dig quickly and powerfully. It digs to find food and to make temporary shelters. It makes sounds such as grunts, squeals, and hisses. Mating occurs in late summer, but embryos are not implanted in the uterus until late February or March, so the gestation period is long. Once implanted, the embryos complete development in about five weeks. Litter size varies from one to five young. Young are helpless at birth but develop rapidly